

# Summary

**T**he core of the 151st *NZ* issue is made of materials devoted to two main topics. The first one focuses on the 1990s in Russia, using this autumn's anniversary as a starting point for analyzing. Thirty years ago, a full-scale political crisis broke out in Russia, caused by the confrontation between the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation and President Boris Yeltsin. The conflict was resolved by force, the army suppressed a coup attempted by supporters of the Supreme Soviet, and the White House – the bastion of the opposition to Yeltsin – was besieged and stormed. The Supreme Soviet was dissolved, and already in December 1993 the first Constitution of the Russian Federation was adopted – the one that determined the political system and the main direction for the future development of the country. That Constitution is still in effect today, though it has undergone profound changes due to the authoritarian reforms of the last 15 years.

The first selection of materials of the 151st *NZ* issue is called “THE WRONG TURN. THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE POLITICAL CRISIS OF 1993”. It opens with an editorial introduction, in which the main issues tackled in the selected articles are outlined. Vadim Korolkov interprets the events of 1993 and the adopted Constitution as “birth trauma” of the Russian legal system. Alexander Zhabrov offers the readers a brief overview of the history and transformation of the Russian political institutions created by the

Constitution of 1993. The topic is further developed by Andrei Medushevsky, who analyses the crisis of 1993 through a legal and political lens and prompted by these interpretations, traces two main trends in the subsequent transformation of the Constitution into an instrument used for establishing and strengthening the authoritarian regime in the country. The selection concludes with Sergei Tsyplyaev's reflections on the true intentions behind the declarations and actions of both sides involved in the conflict in 1993.

Following the first block of materials are several texts thematically adjacent to it. A detailed article by Nikolai Vakhtin (in *CASE STUDY* section) turns the spotlight on a specific region during the Russian 1990s, namely on Chukotka, where the author – a linguist and anthropologist – was conducting field research early in the decade. The focus of Vakhtin's piece is the relationship between the local government system established in Soviet times, which not only survived in the completely new conditions, but even increased its control over the region, and the Russian capitalism of the 1990s, with its eagerness for total liberation of any economic and social activity. “The conservative Soviet tradition” versus “the opening new frontiers” in the Russian humanities and social sciences of that decade is the subject of the overview contributed by Alexander Dmitriev and Andrei Ilyin (in *CULTURE OF POLITICS* section). Alexey Levinson also touches on the topic of the Russian 1990s in his regular column *SOCIOLOGICAL LYRICS*.

The second main focus of this *NZ* issue is a fascinating episode from the history of cultural transfer between Japan and Europe, primarily France (although the selection also contains a Russian feature). This block, compiled by Yana Yanpolskaya and Alexander Belyaev and entitled “JAPAN – FRANCE – (RUSSIA): FROM THE HISTORY OF CULTURAL TRANSFER”, opens with a translation of one of the lectures given by Roland Barthes at the Collège de France in 1979, shortly before his death. Barthes had a special connection with Japan; he visited the country several times, and his impressions and notes from the first trip formed the basis of his book “*Empire of Signs*”. In the lecture translated here, Barthes, drawing on the aesthetic experience derived from one traditional Japanese poetic form, haiku, offers his audience an interpretation of the European concept of “nuance”.

The French orientalist Maurice Pinguet also engages with the topic of “Roland Barthes and Japan” in his own piece – and the foreword to which was written by the French writer and Japanologist Michaël Ferrier. The next contribution is a letter written by yet another French scholar, philosopher and anthropologist, André Leroi-Gourhan, to a Louvre employee, engraver and orientalist Jean Buhot. Before World War II, Leroi-Gourhan spent two years in Japan, conducting ethnological studies and collecting objects of material culture of the Ainu people. This experience influenced his subsequent research, that was no longer related to Japan.

One of the compilers of this selection of texts, Alexander Belyaev, publishes his own correspondence with the Japanese philologist, poet and literary critic Inuhiko Yomota; they discuss the

influence that the French semiotics and post-structuralism have had on Japanese philosophy since the 1960s until today. What follows is a translation of Inuhiko Yomota’s “COVID notes”, wherein a fusion of “the Japanese” and “the European” results in the author’s idiosyncratic tone. The block closes with an essay by Alexander Belyaev, in which he compares such sociocultural and cultural psychological types as the Western “intellectual” and the Japanese “bunjin” (amateur artist, scholar). Along with some Japanese names, Belyaev’s essay makes mention of Europeans, namely Milan Kundera and Alexander Piatigorsky.

In addition to the main thematic blocks, the 151st *NZ* issue includes materials pertaining to other geographical, historical, political and social concerns. *NZ ARCHIVE* contains an excerpt from the memoirs of one of the first Iraqi female doctors, Saniha Amin Zaki (1920–2017). African affairs, which have recently become one of *NZ* focal points, are represented by a voluminous overview of the dismal history of federalism in Nigeria written by Andrei Zakharov, as well as his review of “*New Perspectives on the Nigeria-Biafra War: No Victory, No Vanquished*” – a collection of articles about the civil war in Biafra in the late 1960s. The new instalment of Tatiana Vorozheikina’s column *THE REVERSE OF THE METHOD* is dedicated to the political situation in Chile and disputes around the figure of the dictator Augusto Pinochet.

The issue wraps up with the *NEW BOOKS* section, which, along with the aforementioned review by Andrei Zakharov, contains another noteworthy piece: Boris Sokolov’s detailed analysis of Sergei Nelipovich’s book “*The Russian Front during World War I: The Casualties on Both Sides. 1915*”.

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